

THE INVENTION CLAIMED IS:

1                   1.    A method of controlling a set top box  
2    comprising:  
3                    providing a set top box that can be  
4    controlled by a telephone line coupled to the set top box;  
5                    receiving a telephone call from a calling  
6    party via the telephone line; and  
7                    controlling the set top box via at least one  
8    command transmitted by the calling party to the set top box  
9    during the telephone call.

1                   2.    The method of claim 1 wherein controlling  
2    the set top box via at least one command transmitted by the  
3    calling party comprises receiving at least one  
4    predetermined number dialed by the calling party.

1                   3.    The method of claim 1 wherein controlling  
2    the set top box comprises disabling the set top box.

1                   4.    The method of claim 1 wherein controlling  
2    the set top box comprises enabling the set top box.

1                   5.    The method of claim 1 wherein controlling  
2    the set top box comprises directing the set top box to  
3    decrease a volume of a television set coupled to the set  
4    top box.

1                   6.    The method of claim 5 further comprising  
2   directing the set top box to transmit an audio signal from  
3   the calling party over a speaker of the television set.

1                   7.    The method of claim 1 wherein controlling  
2   the set top box comprises directing the set top box to play  
3   at least an audio portion of a television event over the  
4   telephone line.

1                   8.    The method of claim 1 wherein controlling  
2   the set top box comprises directing the set top box to tune  
3   to a television event.

1                   9.    The method of claim 1 wherein controlling  
2   the set top box comprises directing the set top box to  
3   record a television event.

1                   10.   The method of claim 9 wherein directing the  
2   set top box to record a television event comprises  
3   directing the set top box to transmit a record command to a  
4   video recording device.

1                   11.   The method of claim 1 wherein controlling  
2   the set top box comprises directing the set top box to play  
3   a telephone message previously recorded by the set top box.

1                   12.   An apparatus adapted to employ a telephone  
2   interface comprising:

3                   a processor comprising computer program code  
4 adapted to control a set top box via at least one command  
5 transmitted by a calling party over a telephone line  
6 coupled to the set top box, the command being transmitted  
7 during a telephone call.

1                   13. A set top box comprising the apparatus of  
2 claim 12.

1                   14. A computer program product for controlling a  
2 set top box comprising:

3                   a medium readable by a computer, the  
4 computer readable medium having means for controlling a set  
5 top box via at least one command transmitted by a calling  
6 party over a telephone line coupled to the set top box, the  
7 command being transmitted during a telephone call.